



The value of young dogs

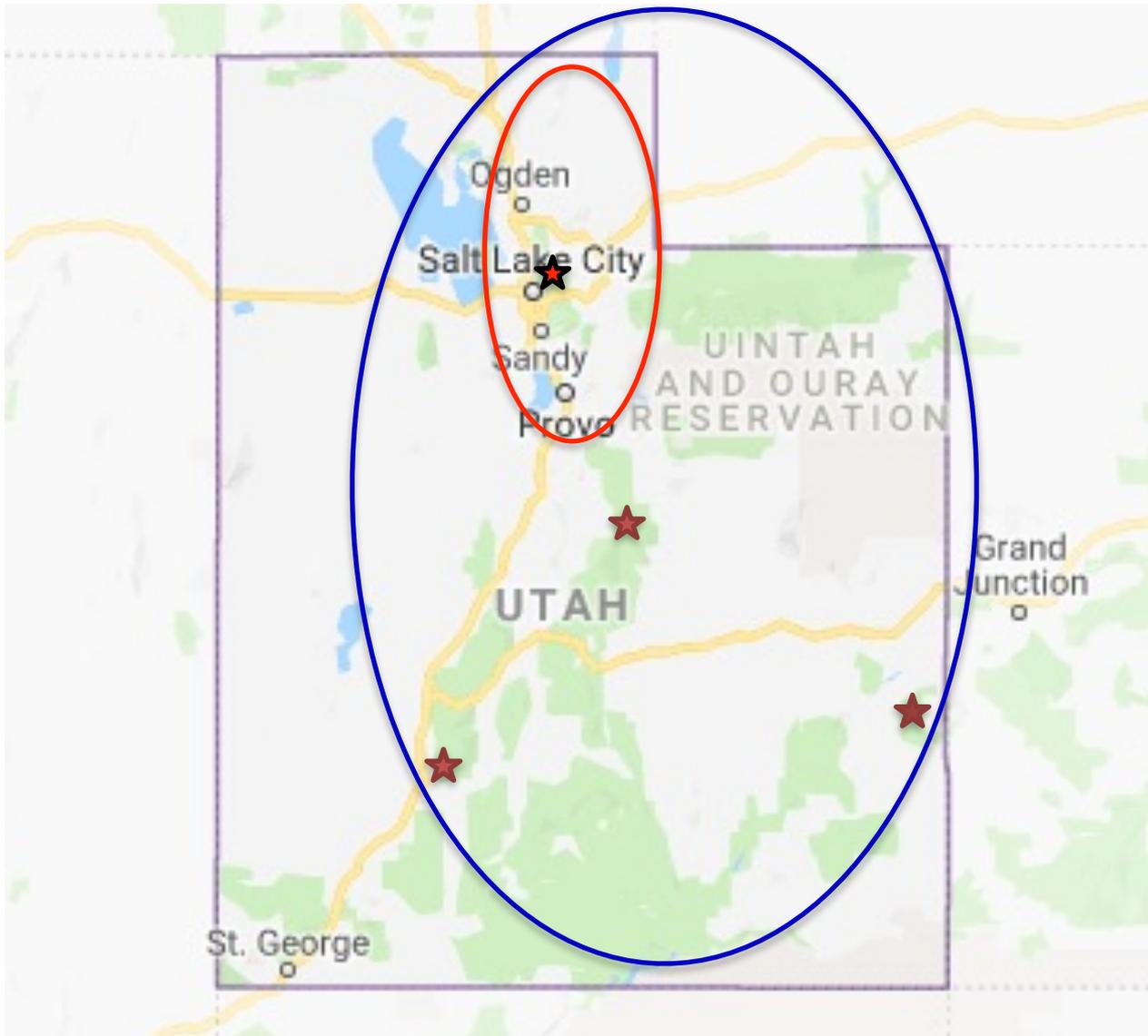


Wasatch Backcountry Rescue (WBR) is a 501c3 non-profit organization working in the Wasatch Mountains east of Salt Lake City, Utah, under the direction of the five Wasatch front County Sheriff's Search and Rescue divisions. Counties include Salt Lake, Summit, Weber, Wasatch and Utah County. WBR has the highest level of standards for its members and has been instrumental in bringing innovative rescue technologies to both the national and international scene.

Our primary purpose is rapid response for avalanche rescue, winter related mountain rescue, and medical evacuation incidents using trained professionals and search and rescue dogs. WBR personnel are full-time avalanche professionals from member organizations who are familiar with local terrain, snowpack, and current conditions. This makes WBR the resource of choice for initial response to winter accidents in the Wasatch ranges's vast and heavily used backcountry.

Our secondary purpose is to educate local backcountry users in safe techniques for mountain travel plus the equipment and methods used for self rescue in case of any incident. Members of WBR include teams from professional mountain patrols and emergency care providers: Alta, Snowbird, Solitude, Brighton, Snowbasin, Park City Mountain, Deer Valley, Powder Mountain, the Wasatch Powderbird Guides, Sundance Ski Resort, US Forest Service, Air Med, Life Flight and Utah Department of Transportation. The Wasatch Backcountry Rescue group is also a voting member of the International Commission of Alpine Rescue (ICAR). WBR is dedicated to saving the life of the avalanche victim through training, professional response, and education.





East Face Laurel Peak 25th January 2019



[UAC Full Accident Report:](#)







	A.	B.	C.	R.
Alta	4	0	1	1
Brighton	3	0	1	0
Deer Valley	2	2	0	0
Park City	9	0	1	1
Powder Mountain	2	3	1	0
Snowbird	4	0	1	2
Sonwbasin	3	0	0	2
Sundance	1	0	0	1
Solitude	3	0	1	0
Wasatch Peaks Ranch	1	0	1	0
	31	5	7	7

2023 | 24 Season Review



**131% Average
Snowpack**

**902 Avalanches
Reported**

**63 People
Caught**

**2
Killed**

Obedience Evaluations
Wasatch Backcountry Rescue



Evaluator Name:

Evaluator Resort:

Date and Time:

Location:

K9:

K9 Age:

K9 Resort:

Handler:

Overall Pass / Fail
Notes:

Heel Pass / Fail
Notes:

Come Pass / Fail
Notes:

Long stay Pass / Fail
Notes:

Dog human aggression Pass / Fail
Notes:

Dog dog aggression Pass / Fail
Notes:

Recall stop Pass / Fail
Notes:

Additional Notes:







WBR Avalanche Rescue Team Evaluation

Date _____ Location _____ Test Level _____

Dog _____ Handler _____ Home Area _____

Evaluator _____ Pass Fail

HANDLER

I. Situational Awareness

- A. Transport: Analyzes transport options and arrives on scene in a rapid and safe manner.
- B. Scene Safety: Insures that the site is sufficiently safe for rescue operations.
- C. Interview: Handles stress. Obtains all necessary information while starting the dog quickly with a sense of urgency for a live find.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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II. Strategy

- A. Utilizes wind, terrain, clues, and high probability areas to the team's advantage.
- B. Revise as necessary: recheck wind conditions, interview victims as they are uncovered, utilizes articles as clues.
- C. Analysis of area coverage and effectiveness: Able to note which areas of the slide path may have been missed or not covered thoroughly.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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III. Command of Dog

- A. Trigger: Puts dog into work/search mode quickly and effectively.
- B. Directional Commands: Whether verbal or visual, minimal as to not distract dog, but when used are timed appropriately to facilitate efficient search area coverage.
- C. Restart: After a find, dog moves away from find and restarts in a quick, positive manner.
- D. Reward: Intense but short to return dog to work; longer at the conclusion of the search.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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IV. Reading of Dog

- A. Recognizes the dog showing scent interest and withholds commands that distract the dog.
- B. Recognizes the various cues the dog displays when showing interest and alerting.
- C. Indication: Stays away and withholds anything verbal to allow an independent, sustained indication by the dog.
- D. Indication: Able to discern interest from alert/indication and positively identifies the location of the burials without false alerts.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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Total Score - Handler:

I. Responsiveness to Handler

- A. Controllable during whatever means of transport the handler chooses.
- B. Responds quickly to both verbal or visual commands.
- C. Follows handler's commands at trigger and restart; immediately ready to work when directed.
- D. Excited to receive reward from handler at the conclusion of search.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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II. Work Ethic

- A. Ranging: Natural or directed area coverage; shows willingness to work independently and away from handler.
- B. Intensity: Works hard and fast.
- C. Focus: Wants the find; not dependant on the handler or distracted by other people, dogs, or other objects on the scene.
- D. Endurance: Able to sustain energy level throughout the search.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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III. Scent Response

- A. Interest: Cone Response: Catches cone, recognizes scent, and reacts towards cone.
Work to Refind: Hungry to refind cone if lost.
- B. Alert: Cone to Victim: Moves down the cone funnel with confidence.
Pinpoint: Quickly brackets to the scent source.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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IV. Indication

- A. Trained, readable behavior initiated independently from handler and distinct from any other behavior on avalanche site.
- B. Sustained behavior: High excitement and desire for the find; sustained long enough to insure the certainty of the handler.

Notes:

Score	1	2	3	4	5
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Total Score - Dog

Scoring As Follows:

- 1 = Poor
- 2 = Fair
- 3 = Good
- 4 = Very Good
- 5 = Outstanding

Minimum passing score is 12 for both handler and dog.

Times

Live 1		Art. 1	
Live 2		Art. 2	
Live 3		Art. 3	

VALIDATION RULES

- To remain in the program a Candidate Team must pass obedience and search test within 18 months from the date of acceptance.
- To remain on the callout list, dog teams must renew their WBR certification, on a biennial basis, No testing will be done after March 31st.
- To remain on the callout list, dogs older than ten years old must renew annually.
- Testing for Levels A & B will be held during the winter season. The handlers will be expected to stay current with their validations and contact the Dog Committee to set up testing.
- Testing times are early season with each member ski area helping with the testing site preparation.
- No more than two failures will be allowed during one season.



GENERAL FORMAT – TEST SITE

- The test area shall be at most 100 square yards unless snow conditions dictate otherwise. All tests must start from the top of the slide path.
- The perimeter shall be adequately marked and visible from point to point.
- The entire test area shall be uniformly disturbed, and there shall be areas shoveled (stay in skis and use only your shovel, not your hands, to disturb the area) that will appear to the dog team to be possible burial sites.
- Victims shall be buried 3-5 feet deep.
- The burial of victims shall be done in a manner that will leave no visual clues for the testing team.
- There shall be no surface clue.
- Two properly scented articles of proper materials shall be placed at least a day in advance (or when weather permits) 12-18 inches deep in line with the victims. In addition, one article shall be outside the path for a reward. Articles must be sweater or backpack size; no gloves or hats.



- No articles or toys are allowed in the hole.
- Victim(s) must be unknown to the dog of the testing team.
- To prevent tracking, “victims and shovelers” will enter from above the test site and from the windward side if possible.
- The shoveler (brought from the testers resort) shall not advise the handler. The shoveler may only perform tasks assigned by the handler.
- Handlers shall be allowed to probe for victims. Victims shall have protective cover to prevent injury.
- Shovelers, evaluators, and ski equipment shall be placed where it will not cue the testing team.
- Site preparation, including victims’ holes, shall be done at least one day in advance of the test day to minimize the residual scent at the burial sites. Only NEW dog holes can be used for validation.
- A witness can only give vague information, no quantities, no directions.



STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION



1. Number of evaluators shall include at least two from a different agency.
2. Any protest of the test scenario shall be presented and considered prior to the test, e.g. presence of smoke, fuel or female dog in heat.
3. Test time shall start after parameters and test situation has been discussed. Interview time is counted.
4. No team with a female dog in heat will be allowed to test with other teams present.
5. All evaluators are answerable to the WBR dog committee and may be dismissed by the same. However, all test results are final and may not be reversed by WBR.
6. Selection of an evaluator is by unanimous agreement of the WBR Dog Committee.
7. All teams testing will be given a fair and equal test situation. Teams will not test on the same day on a previously used site.
8. This is a baseline test to assess dog and handler skills, not to trick them.



The Three R's



1. The right dog
2. The right handler
3. The right program







Wasatch Backcountry Rescue (WBR) Non-Profit Organization Working in the Wasatch Mountains

Wasatch Backcountry Rescue

[DONATE](#)

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